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Walls come tumbling down

Work underway

By Grey Perry

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DUXBURY — After sitting dormant for several years, the old Alden School has come to life.

As it undergoes its transformation from school to library, passersby can see hay bales around the site and the large piles of topsoil being saved for final landscaping next year. If weather permits, there will soon be a base coat of paving to define the access and parking lots. All planned tree removal has been done.

After the decision was made to use the Alden building, the architect had the unusual assignment of building a library from the inside out. All that will remain of the building is essentially its outside shell. The 40,000 square feet inside have been designed to accommodate the many functions of this multi-use library, and will be more than triple the size of the present building. The community function rooms on the lower level can be used when the library itself is closed.

The major interior demolition work is 75 percent complete. Partitions that defined the classrooms and halls are gone, all heating and ventilation equipment

is being removed, everything down to the structural walls, including plaster, will be removed. Only then can engineers make their final measurements for the steel which will allow for the open interior spaces designed by the architect. Most of the structural elements of the building are custom, and must be made to order. All heating, air conditioning and ventilation equipment will be new.

Czaba Kovacs, hired by town manager Rocco Longo as clerk of the works, will oversee the project.

"We should have the demolition finished within a few weeks. If the weather cooperates, we can get a base coat down to pave the parking areas. The old building did not have a sprinkler system, and the new one will be sprinklered which will require more water pressure. Before Alden Street was paved, we got 30 feet of the larger new line in, so the new paving won't have to be torn up to do that. We hope to get utilities underground before winter," he said.

John Bidgood, the superintendent for the project's contractor Slotnik Construction, said there are 6 to 15 men on the job, depending on need. The contractor has bid on the job on the basis of completing it within 365 days

from the start date of Oct. 1, 1996. However, Bidgood stresses this will depend on what the engineers find after demolition is completed. "Until we get down to the bare walls, we can't make final measurements. The steel work must be exact, and we may need new footings for some of it," he said.

Kovacs said the completion date will also depend on how many change orders occur along the way, which could extend the project. He said safety is a big issue on site. The building is locked up each night, and a metal fence has been erected around the existing playground in addition to the snowfencing in place.



Staff photo/Grey Perry

Planning ahead — John Bidgood and Czaba Kovacs go over renovation plans for the Alden Library.